

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1347

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 21291

STATE PASS DEA WASHDC AND USAID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR TH

SUBJECT: JOINT THAI-U.S. EVALUATION OF UTILIZATION OF U.S.

SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION

REF: STATE 178546

1. COPIES OF THE JOINT THAI-U.S. REPORT EVALUATING UTILIZATION OF U.S.-SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ARE BEING POUCHED DEPT (EA/TB) FOR DISTRIBUTION. EVALUATION TEAM SPENT MANY HOURS GOING OVER DETAILS OF HELICOPTER UTILIZATION AND CAREFULLY WORKING OUT WITH THAI AND UN USERS THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR AIR SUPPORT AND HOW THEY CAN BETTER UTILIZE AIR ASSETS. BASED UPON THEIR FINDINGS, JOINT TEAM RECOMMENDS THAT HELICOPTERS PREVIOUSLY PROMISED RTG BY WRITTEN AGREEMENT BE PROVIDED TO TNPD. I FULLY CONCUR WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION AND WOULD FURTHER LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THIS EVALUATION ALONG WITH THE SEVERAL OTHER U.S. INVESTIGATIONS WHICH HAVE LOOKED INTO THE HELICOPTER ISSUE, HAVE MADE THE THAI WELL AWARE OF OUR CONCERN ABOUT PROPER UTILIZATION OF ANY HELICOPTER ASSETS PROVIDED THEM. I INTEND TO REINFORCE THAT CONCERN IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HIGHER OFFICIALS, BUT FEEL THAT IT IS NOW TIME TO MAKE DEFINITE DECISION TO PROVIDE RTG ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS.

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2. GIVEN PRESENT LEVEL OF UTILIZATION, AMERICAN SIDE OF EVALUATION TEAM BELIEVES THAT THAI COULD BEST MAKE USE OF THREE ADDITIONAL CCINC HELICOPTERS. ALTHOUGH THAI POLICE AIR DIVISION (TPAD) INTENDS TO PURCHASE EIGHT MORE HELICOPTERS, PLANS ARE NOT VERY FAR ALONG IN BUDGET PROCESS, AND COUNTRY-WIDE DEMANDS ON TPAD FLEET ARE FAR GREATER THAN THEY CAN MEET. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, HOWEVER, MAKE AMERICAN EVALUATORS BELIEVE US HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE THE FIVE HELICOPTERS PREVIOUSLY PROMISED. EVALUATION REPORT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF, BUT I CANNOT OVER-EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF ALSO CONSIDERING POSSIBLE AND POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS WHICH WE RISK BY FAILURE TO ABIDE BY OUR AGREEMENT. OUR CONTINUED REFUSAL TO SUPPLY HELICOPTERS HAS MADE THAI WONDER ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM; NOW THAT THEIR TEAM HAS TAKEN A HARD LOOK AT HELICOPTER UTILIZATION AND AGREED UPON IMPROVED SCHEDULING AND USE, WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH PLANS FOR DELIVERY.

WHITEHOUSE

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